



City of Cambridge

96.

IN CITY COUNCIL

September 11, 1995

COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN
COUNCILLOR DUEHAY
COUNCILLOR GALLUCCIO
VICE MAYOR RUSSELL

WHEREAS: There have been a series of Public Meetings with regards to the layout of the Proposed Quincy Square Design; and

WHEREAS: Many suggestions have been forwarded to the Landscape architect and plans have been drawn but there is no mention of the placing of the Memorial Marker; now therefore be it

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to report back to this City Council within one weeks time on the status of the design plans for Quincy Square.

In City Council September 11, 1995
Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.
Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "D. Margaret Drury".

ATTEST:-

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk

To go w/ Order #96

September 11, 1995

cc: Roger Booth
Liz Epstein
Susan Schlesinger
City Council
John Pitkin

To: Cambridge Community Development
From: Concerned Citizens for Quincy Square
Subject: September 13th meeting on Quincy Square

As you know, from past meetings both public and private, the "Concerned Citizens for Quincy Square" came together because of our common concern that the final outcome of the Quincy Square project be something acceptable to the entire community. From the public meetings, a consensus seemed to emerge that in designing any new green space which effects so many people in the city, there needs to be serious consideration to both automobile and pedestrian traffic, as well as business and residential considerations.

While we are gratified that the city has moved away from the scheme four approach which appeared to present some questionable consequences for automobile traffic in the area, we are concerned about some of the details yet to be worked out around the modified scheme three plan. Furthermore, there appear to be some new developments to the plan which were not unveiled at the public discussions. Now it would appear, that it is the intention of the Park committee to alter the sidewalk and street configuration on Massachusetts Avenue extending from Plympton Street to the Inn at Harvard.

Given that Massachusetts Avenue has traditionally been a major traffic corridor through which automobiles flow through the city, it seems remarkable that no traffic study was done to measure the effects of all proposed changes to this area, and its ramifications for the immediate and surrounding neighborhoods. More to the point, however, we question whether it is within the scope of a committee who's expressed purpose was to create a satisfying green space in front of the Inn to tinker with major traffic alterations which will affect the lives of all Cambridge residents. If, as it appears, the intention of this committee is to turn this part of Massachusetts Avenue from Plympton Street to the Inn into a pedestrian way, we wonder where this mandate come from?

And so, before any decisions are made about curb cuts, we feel that the committee and the public should be clear on what the scope of its work should be. There are, as well, some unresolved issues such as where the tour buses will park, that need to be dealt with before any final decision is made. If, and it is

currently unclear, the parking meters are not restored to Quincy Street and this becomes a parking area for tour busses, the neighborhood will have lost a significant number of parking spaces, as well as acquiring a significant nuisance.

Although the committee has come a long way in meeting our concerns about the park, there are still some major concerns that need to be worked out. It was our understanding, that the public would be able to have its input into the working out of some of these details, both as to the design of the park and the curb cuts. And so, we offer the following concerns and recommendations:

Traffic and Parking

We understand the need to slow down the traffic at certain points in the square, but there is concern that this effect can be taken to extreme and have the effect of backing up traffic to the extent that Massachusetts Avenue becomes such a frustrating driving experience that drivers chose to drive down neighboring arteries and side streets instead. We wonder at the concept of creating a pedestrian way without regard for the businesses who by their very nature attract automobile traffic, both customer and loading vehicles.

Concerns:

1. Narrowed lanes - the proposed narrowing of automobile lanes would cause a problem in an area where you have motorists frequently trying to enter and exit parking spaces and the double parking of delivery trucks
2. Double parking - Most of the businesses in the area require the service of loading vehicles. Extending the sidewalk with the proposed "neck downs" or "bump outs" will require them to double park, backing up oncoming traffic.
4. Increased pedestrian activity - If the intention of the park in front of the inn and the green space in front of Roosevelt gate is to create a pedestrian draw, one has to account for the added number of people who will be tempted to cross Mass Avenue in an already difficult traffic situation.
5. Emergency Vehicles - With all these obsticals put in the way of a smooth flow of traffic we wonder if this might not become a serious problem for emergency vehicles, including all police and fire vehicles trying to go through this area.

Recommendations:

1. Maintain current lane size
2. Shift traffic island - The current plan would shift the traffic triangle into Mass Ave, narrowing lanes for existing traffic; we propose shifting island back toward the yard or making it smaller.
2. Elimination or significant scaling back of "neckdowns"
 - a. elimination of neckdowns in front of Roosevelt gate and similarly not widening sidewalk near Plympton Street.
 - b. Scaling back neckdowns at Bow and Mass Ave.
3. Adequate parking - minimize the time it takes to enter and exit parking spots by providing adequate space - ie. snow removal and minivans. Restore total parking area.
3. Sitelines - Any planting of trees should take into consideration the visibility by automobiles of oncoming traffic
Move bus stop in front of church instead of park; as currently proposed, stopped busses would block site lines of traffic.
4. Fewer crosswalks - Some of the crosswalks are unnecessary
5. Paving street with cobblestone or using signage to slow cars where pedestrian safety is of concern - ie. the newly established right hand turn from Mass Ave to Harvard Street.
6. Passive Park and minimized seating - A greenspace which does not act as a pedestrian draw

Park Design

While the committee has addressed many of our concerns regarding seating, the design remains conducive to the congregation of significant numbers of people, particularly the large areas of paved area. Aside from creating an "attractive nuisance", it is questionable, as well, whether the city wants to create a pedestrian draw in an area that has no traffic light.

Recommendations:

1. Paved areas - limit pathways to a generous ten foot width and fill remainder with groundcover.
2. Benches on Mass Ave should be limited to the west of Roosevelt gate

Finally, there are certain issues we feel have been touched on but not adequately addressed.

1. Snow removal

2. Tour busses

3. Noise ordinance

4. World War II memorial and the naming of the park - We have yet to see a plan of the park including the World War II memorial which the original traffic island was meant to commemorate. We would like to see the park named for this member of our neighborhood who was felled during the war.

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Whereas: Many suggestions have been forwarded to the landscape architect and plans have been drawn but there is no mention of the placing of the Memorial Marker; now therefore be it

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Bluejay, Galluccio, Russell
Consent Order #96

Councillor Sullivan re: Layout
of the Proposed Quincy Square Design.

CM
382.

report received 9/18/95.

See Agenda # 7 of 9/18/95

In City Council September 11, 1995

Order Adopted